DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 089 281 CS 201 065

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TITLE Black Literature and Mainstream American Literature: One and Inseparable.
PUB DATE Nov 73
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (63rd, Philadelphia, November 22-24, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *American Literature; American Studies; English Instruction; Higher Education; *Literary History; Literary Influences; Naturalism; *Negro Achievement; Negro Culture; *Negro History; *Negro Literature; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

In this survey, the interrelationships of mainstream American literature and black literature are developed within each of the following periods: early literature--the oral tradition; early literature--literature of protest; post-civil war--literature of social consciousness; early 20th century--the American renaissance; the 30's--literature of the depression years; and the contemporary scene--alienation and identity. A comparative chart on black literature in the development of mainstream American literature and a bibliography are included. (LL)

BLACK LITERATURE AND MAINSTREAM AMERICAN LITERATURE: ONE AND INSEPARABLE

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The three hundred year by - pass- more readily recognized as the pernicious neglect of literature by and about various ethic minorities-- especially Black Americans-- is now a matter of record and needs no further documentation. In recent years, the wave of Black awareness has focused attention upon many long lost or ignored literary works. The result has been a virtual flood of re-issued literary works; textbooks on Black poetry, drama, and non-fiction vie for the adoption market; and practically every issue of any literary or educational journal carries at least one article devoted to a defense of Black literature- a cataloguing of reasons for its study or a listing of those students for whom it is "good."

It is this defensive posture that defeats the purpose of the Black awareness movement. Implicit in that posture is an apology for that which needs no apology. The continued emphasis upon Black literature as a separate entity outside of the broader context of the society in which it developed leaves the serious implications that Black literature really has been distinct from and totally lacking in influence upon the development of American literature. Studies in isolation; the works somehow are just "there," in some instances considered good "for Black writers," but they remain cloaked in semi-invisibility, separate and not quite equal.

This continued separation of Black literature from the mainstream may well be enhanced by avowed proponents of Black literature study who have spent so much time and verbiage trying to establish the legitimacy of their product that they have ignored the obvious; the vast body of literature by and about Black Americans, spanning as it does a period of three centuries,

has been integral to the development of American literature. It's themes alternately reflect, influence and foreshadow the themes in mainstream literature; so much that it is easy to draw parallels within particular time periods and to note common threads in the development of both literatures. Further, there are many obvious interrelationships that never have been adequately explored. This survey is an initial attempt to close that gap.

In establishing once and for all the legitimacy of Black literature study, we can reject without question the concepts of earlier Black writing as "poor." If the indictment is indeed valid, then Black literature stands on equal footing with most American literature prior to the twentieth century. From the point of rejection we can move swiftly to a serious comparison of the development of the characteristics of the two literatures. To accomplish this comparison, the most logical sources, in addition to a fairly extensive back-ground of reading in American literature and Black literature, are the literary histories of the United States and some of the recent historical and critical reviews of Black literature.

Few comprehensive literary histories of the United States exist. Because Literary History of the United States, edited by Robert E. Spiller in 1963 (cited hereafter as LHUS) is one of the most comprehensive, it has been used for this comparison despite the fact that within that tome (1511 pages) the topic "Negroes" outdistances "feminism" by exactly nine pages--seventeen pages to eight pages respectively. The names of only eight Black writers are mentioned and none of them receives more than a single paragraph; but in other literary histories the topic of Black writing is non existent. Sources for the history of Black literature vary, with introductory material from Dark Symphony by Emmanuel and Gross and Black Voices by Abraham Chapman often used.

A critical review of the literatures yields the following shared

characteristics for each designated time period:

1. Early Literature: The Oral Tradition
2. Early Literature: Literature of Protest
3. Post-Civil War: Literature of Social Consciousness
4. Early 20th Century: The American Renaissance
5. The 30's: Literature of the Depression Years
6. The Contemporary Scene Alienation and Identity

Within the context of this survey the interrelationships of mainstream literature and Black literature are developed within each period. Also provided is a comparative chart for easy reference and a list of useful references for further study.

I. Early American Literature: The Oral Tradition

In the introduction to Literary History of the United States, the editor defines the basic approach as the recording and explanation of the great men and women who have made this culture speak to the imagination. He goes on to specify that American literature represents a series of cultural waves beating in from across the Atlantic. These waves obviously are European, for no mention is made of the impact from the Dark Continent. Early colonial "literature" existed only in imported European forms which reflected the strongly masculine world and religious piety of Protestantism.

As in most newly formed societies, no native written American literature existed for some time, since survival conditions are not conducive to literary production. The tradition of oral public expression (forums, political debates) strongly influenced the development of a kind of literary intellect. Especially strong was the Puritan use of the pulpit. The only writing consisted of utilitarian reports, chronicles, and journals carrying records of exploration and colonial development.

During this early period, especially in the South, a submerged oral

tradition flourished. For the slaves who invented these tales, legislated illiteracy could not dull the imagination. Folk and slave narratives passed on from generations to generation and the sermons of un-named Black preachers established an oral tradition that exists to the present. Spirituals, thought by white masters to be hauntingly beautiful expressions of the simplicity of the slave mind, carried secret coded messages impending moves toward freedom or offered hope to the desolate. Strong, too was the religious fervor, its promises of a life of ease and splendor in the next world helped dull the pain of everyday existence.

In summary, the strong oral tradition which always seems to provide the base for a later development of literature, manifest itself in both the mainstream society and in the slave culture. Neither had begun to come of age.

II. Early American Literature: Literature of Protest

Immediately prior to the Revolutionary War, the philosophers, statesmen and pamphletters of the period engaged in expository persuasion to convince Americans that the revolt against British tyranny was a just cause. Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Washington, Patrick Henry, Hamilton and others laid what LHUS refers to as the "foundation of a national literature in the practised literature of ideas." The fiery oratory and persuasive writing of the pre- and post-war periods represents the first good writing in America which, though it was not altogether literary, was not merely imitative of European tradition. Thomas Jefferson's rhetorical skill is largely credited for the excellence of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Paine's Age of Reason and the later works of Benjamin Franklin contributed to the beginnings of an American literature.

The pre- and post-Revolutionary period also produced the first writing published by Afro-Americans. One of the earliest of these writers was Phillis Wheatley, a slave girl of Boston (later freed) whose poetry represented the

epitome of classical European style generally of autobiographical slave narratives protesting the evils of slave system. Examples are the verse of Jupiter Hammon and the pamphlet by Briton Hammon, A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, A Negro Man, both published in 1760. From that time until the Civil War a steady stream of protest literature poured out, destined, according to Abraham Chapman to be "stillborn" because of literacy restrictions and other complications.

The first Negro newspapers and magazines appeared during the post-Revolutionary period. Benjamin Banneker, the genius who invented the alarm clock and who was commissioned by President Washington to assist in laying out the streets of Washington, D.C., produced his Almanack from 1791 to 1796. David Walker's Walker's Appeal appeared in 1829; John Russwurn's Freedom's Journal, the first Black newspaper, appeared in New York in 1827. And Frederick Douglas, an ex-slave from Maryland, published his North Star (the title refers to the method of determining direction by the Underground Railroad) in 1847. Of particular significance is the opening edition's editorial of Freedom's Journal, published March 16, 1827:

> We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly...(quoted in Black Voices, p. 23)

Concern with "pleading our own cause" was predominant for Black writers of the period. Blacks were too much preoccupied with survival to parallel the "flowering of New England literature" often attributed to the period of Transcendetalism, the cultural renaissance achieved by writers like Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Emerson, Hawthorne, Holmes, Lowell, Thoreau, Whittier, and Bryant. LHUS attributes the development of this first really American literature to increased coastal urbanization and the accompanying development of increased leisure. The Transcendentalists' emphasis upon the uniqueness of the individual and of humanity produced a literature which represented the "middle road in

opinions and tastes" and which became the unifying core of the national culture, (LHUS, p. 283.) Only Edgar Allan Poe, who represented the middle states, is characterized as a great innovator in American literature, concerned less with the importance of the artist and more with the created work of art. But the few Blacks who were fortunate enough to gain freedom could ill afford to dally with artistic concerns: they did battle for the survival of a people.

Beneath the surface of America's literary flowering lay the festering core of dissidence and unrest over slavery question. And all of the political and economic concerns about slavery could not have had the impact upon the national conscience that was produced by a single work, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. Not enough people were interested in reading the protest literature written by Blacks; only the writing of a white person could reach the conscience of millions. Yet Mrs. Stowe's accomplishment never could have occurred had it not been for the influence of the slave narratives which she read and for personal accounts she received from slaves in Kentucky and from fugitive Negroes in the North. Thus, indirectly, the submerged literature of Black Americans did reach the conscience of America through one of the most influential novels of all times.

In times of crisis, emphasis cannot remain on artistic concerns. The Civil War period did not produce any great body of literature, either in the mainstream or among Black writers.

III. Post-Civil War: Literature of Social Consciousness

The wounds inflicted by civil strife did not heal easily. And the Westward Movement, though it offered relief from the tensions and pressures of an East coast bursting at the seams, allowed more for a transfer of tensions to other areas. There were no halcyon days in the settlement of new frontiers. Western farmers had little time for literature in their struggle for survival. A few writers, though, did discover and record with finesse and novelty and

freshness the earthiness of "grass-roots America" of the West. Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, and Mark Twain produced portraits of the mid- and far West and in-so doing gave rise to a uniquely American literature.

But the development of the west could not occur rapidly enough to relieve tensions in the crowded cities or stay the dehumanizing effects of industrialization. In the period of Reconstruction in the South, Black Americans knew only briefly the joys of freedom. In every area of the nation farmers facing incursions by the railroads; poverty and suffering in the cities; and the fate of the Black man just out of bondage.

Edward Bellamy, Hamlin Garland, and William Dean Howells used the problem novel, in which realism predominated, to articulate the middle class rejection of the machine age. This realism underwent a transition into the naturalism of Frank Norris (McTeague), Stephen Crane (Red Badge of Courage), Jack London, Theodore Dreiser (Sister Carrie and An American Tragedy), and others who attempted to interpret the basic issues in the human experience in terms of social determinism. Only Mark Twain and O. Henry, in this writer's opinion, were able effectively to counterbalance this preoccupation with current social issues and produce truly great writing that transcends time but still articulates the uniqueness of the writer's environment -- Twain's Mississippi River area and O. Henry's beloved New York City (his "Bagdad on the Subway.")

In the post-Civil War period in the South and elsewhere, Black writers remained preoccupied with the racial condition but were unable still to reach sizeable audiences. Ironically, it was again through a white writer, Joel Chandler Harris, that the Black become acceptable as a literary character. Harris published his "Uncle Remus" stories in the Atlanta Constitution in 1879. These Negro folk tales unfortunately established a tradition that was a mixed blessing; for although they did allow the Black literary character

to exist, they established the shuffling, happy nigger, "Uncle Tom" image in literature (and in the minds of whites) that would allow later for the exterme popularity of Dunbar's poetry. This persistent image later would set the climate for acceptance of what many militant Blacks now view as Booker T. Washington's subservient groveling for white patronage; it would doom intellectuals and militants like William Edward Burghardt DuBois to oblivion except in the most intellectual and un-influential circles.

Up to and including the turn of the century, the essential question for the Black writer was how the conditions of racism and poverty should be dealt with. Two Black leaders whose sharply contrasting ideas have influenced the major courses of action apparent in the movement were Booker T. Washington and DuBois. In his speech at the Atlanta Cotton Exposition in 1895, Washington, who established Tuskeegee Institute, sounded the call for white patronage by stating: "In all things social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." This open endorsement of racial separatism elevated Washington and Tuskeegee Institute to unprecedented status. Millions of dollars poured into the once poverty-stricken school; Washington had the open patronage of great philanthropists and an apparent direct line to the White House.

DuBois, a militant leader whose Niagara Movement later merged with the NAACP, opposed Washington bitterly. His classic statement in Souls of Black Folk, an essay collection published in 1903, predicted the racial strife that was to pervade American life: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line...." DuBois describes with almost lyrical poignancy the psychological plight of the Black man, the duality of his role as an American who is not an American, a man who is not a man. This frustration is clearly articulated in the first paragraph of the book:

> Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by

> others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All nevertheless, flutter around it. They approach me in a half hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in our town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. (Reprinted in Three Negro Classics, p. 221).

Dubois remained militant throughout his life. In his frustration, he turned to the Communist Party and eventually died in self-imposed exile in Africa. Only in recent years, after his death, has DuBois been widely recognized as a spiritual leader of the fight for justice.

Another significant work of the period dealing sensitively with the problem of racial identity and the duality of the Negro role in America is James Weldon Johnson's Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man, published in 1912. It is the sympathetically portrayed story of a near-white young man who faces the problem of deciding whether or not to cross the color line. Autobiography is an excellent work, not at all in the tradition of the earlier "tragic mulatto" stories.

Viewed in retrospect, the period from the Civil War to the turn of the century produced a national literature, half of it submerged, which dwelt upon the same essential problem: the condition of man in a nation where opression and suppression -- economic, social, and racial -- were impeding social justice. This preoccupation with social justice did not encourage (and perhaps prevented) the development of truly mature works of art. Truly great literature is possible only when the artist is able to keep in perspective the emotional aspects of his content so as to give at least equal concentration to the artistic demands of the genre.

IV. The Early Twentieth Century: The American Renaissance

The enthusiasm for social justice which characterized writing at the turn of the century gave way gradually until the period of the twenties in

which a more natural style of writing emerged. Though much of the literature still focused upon social commentary, it was not conspecuous for its concern with political or social movements. There was the "new freedom," the revolt against Victorianism, and an almost weird combination of a general spirit of disillusionment following the first world war. According to LHUS, "It was somehow appropriate that the 1890's should be ushered in with How the Other Half Lives and the 1920's with Main Street and This Side of Paradise." (p. 1118).

The focus was on a glorification of the individual or at least upon the expression of individuality. An experimental flowering of mainstream literature occurred in the poetry of Eliot, the fiction of Hemingway, Dos Pasos, Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe, and in the drama of O'Neill. For the first time, the world began to pay attention to the intellectuals of America; even H.L. Mencken conceded that leadership in the arts "...may eventually transfer itself from the eastern shore of the Atlantic to the western shore." (LHUS, p. 1298).

The explosion of mainstream literature in the twenties was paralleled and in some instances undergirded by the explosion of literature by Black writers out of Harlem; the celebrated Harlem Renaissance had begun. The Harlem Renaissance brought a surge of interest and production in all of the arts. It was encouraged by sympathetic white intellectuals for whom the idea of "slumming" in Harlem might have been a passing vogue; but the era also produced many good literary efforts which drew the attention of major publishers. For Black America the Harlem period was not a rebirth but a beginning of a literary tradition that has continued into the contemporary scene.

The renaissance existed on two levels. At one level the writers emphasized the theatricality of the Negro in song and dance as well as in other literature. The more lowly the socio-economic plight, the more idealized were the characters portrayed -- pimps, prostitutes, porters, gamblers, vagabonds, migrant workers,

domestics. In so doing, writers were unconsciously guilty of a stereotyping not un-cimilar to the "happy nigger" stereotype of the accelerating forces of repression which made the Negro the target of economic and social discrimination and a favorite victim of the Ku Klux Klan.

The poetry of Claude McKay, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps articulated the stance of the "new Negro" in opposition to the white oppressor. Perhaps a touchstone for this facet of the movement exists in McKay's "If We Must Die," published in the Liberator in 1919, in which the poet declares:

> Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack
> Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back

By contrast, writers like James Weldon Johnson and Jean Toomer dwelt upon the beauty and elegance of the Negro's spirit as he bore the burdens of suppression but managed to survive heroically and retain the simplicity of ordinary folk. Johnson's "God's Trombones" portrays the simplicity of the Negro's religion and the sometimes lyrical quality of the Negro sermon. Toomer's major work, Cane, published in 1923, just lately has achieved recognition as an enduring work of art. In Cane, Toomer captures the simple, earthy beauty of life in the rural areas of Georgia -- a beauty that exists despite the reality of persecution and oppression. Loosely referred to as a novel, Cane is a miscellaneous collection of genres that somehow blend together to form a single medium. Many consider Toomer's talents to be a base for some of the experimentation that occurred in the mainstream literature of the period. It is known that Toomer counted among his immediate literary circle such writers as Hart Crane, Kenneth Burke, Gorham Munson, and Waldo Frank.

In summary, the 1920's represented a renaissance in both mainstream literature and in Black literature. Both experienced a birth or rebirth of literary tradition, an experimentation with various forms, and both were inextricably bound to each other by ties of social conditions and stylistic

concerns.

V. Literature of the Depression

The horrors of the depression introduced white Americans to conditions and circumstances not at all new to the Negro, who was accustomed to being the last hired and first fired. Mainstream and Black writers found a new (if unrecognized) kinship. Appalling suffering became the lot of all kinds of people, and the new naturalism attempted to show how man was diminished and frequently destroyed by the sordid and hostile environment in which he was forced to live.

Novels like Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath articulated the horror of poverty; and in close juxtaposition to mainstream literature is the poetry of Sterling Brown and Langston Hughes, which portrays the tragedy of the Black experience. Ann Petry's The Street is an excellent comparison for other depression literature; it portrays the difficulties of a widowed Black woman trying to raise her son in the hostile environment of the city.

For all of American literature, a focal or pivotal point occurred in 1941 with the publication of Richard Wright's Native Son, often referred to as the culimnation of American naturalism. It was at this point that for the first time a Black writer achieved national recognition in the mainstream of American literature. Wright tells a story in which "native" and "son" imply that Bigger, whose condition is all the worse because of his color, has come to represent the deformed product of American society. Native Son looks back upon an era of naturalism and foreshadows the coming era of alienation; it also represents the point at which Black literature and mainstream literature become inextricably bound to each other.

VI. The Contemporary Scene: Alienation and Identity

According to LHUS, the deaths of Faulkner, Hemingway, Frost, and others marked the end of a period framed by two wars. The newer and most productive

literary centers of post-war fiction were the Gentile, rural South of Carson McCuller, Truman Capote, Flannery O'Connor, and William Styron; and the Jewish, urban North of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, J.D. Salinger, and Norman Mailer. These novelists, along with the Beat pundits and Negro authors "...emerged from the tragic underground of culture as the true spokesmen of mid-century America." (LHUS, p. 1420). Naturalism had reached an impasse in fiction; no longer could it interpret the intricacies of contemporary life.

The fiction of contemporary America represents and reflects the intricacies LHUS refers to in its analysis of the period. As is evidenced in the following list, the contemporary novel runs the gamut of types, styles and purposes. Noteworthy is the presence of several Black writers; considered as American, not as Black writers.

Direct naturalism:	Motley, Knock on Any Door
Monstrous realism:	Burroughs, Naked Lunch
Neopicaresques:	Bellow, Augie March Ellison, Invisible Man
Grotesque or Gothic:	McCullers, Ballad of the Sad Cafe
Mythical allegories:	Malamud, The Natural
Romances:	Capote, The Grass Harp
Poetic Realism:	Malamud, The Assistant Baldwin, Go Tell It On the Mountain
Hard-boiled realism:	Jones, From Here to Eternity
Comic realism:	Roth, Letting Go
Satirical fiction:	McCarthy, A Charmed Life
Dark fantasy:	Hawkes, Time Twig
Clownish Humor	Heller, Catch 22
Existential novel:	Styron, Set This House on Fire
Ironic comedy:	Updike, Rabbit, Run

(The above list is a footnote in LHUS, p. 1420).

As far as the short story is concerned, Emmanuel and Gross identify approximately fifty Black writers who have published since 1950; among these the only common element is variety in treatment of themes of Black identity and alienation. The same diversity attributed to recent novels and short stories is also true of the drama. Examples are Lorraine Hansberry's "Raisin in the Sun" and Baldwin's "Amen Corner." Other plays are categorized as Negro histories or deal with the less tragic areas of urban life. Significant in these categories are Lofton Mitchell is "Ballad of Winter Soldiers," Alice Childress' "Trouble in Mind" and Douglas Turner Ward's "Happy Ending."

The social theme of Black identity (or invisibility) tends still to predominate in plays like Ed Bullins' "Goin' a Buffalo," "In the Wine Time," and "The Electronic Nigger," which tend to be not only realistic but profane. Other diverse moods of Black dramatists are represented in such plays as Lonnie Elder's "Ceremonies in Dark Old Men" and Lofton Mitchell's "Tell Pharoh."

Black writers also are prolific in the area of non-fiction. Emmanuel and Gross (in 1968) identified two hundred thirty titles produced since 1950. These include autobiographies, histories, and civil rights treaties. Lerone Bennett's Before the Mayflower places American history in an entirely new perspective. E. Franklin Frazier's Black Bourgeosie (1957) deals with mobility among middle class Blacks. There also is a seemingly endless list of extremely recent and provocative treatments like Price Cobb's Black Rage and Sam Yette's The Choice, an account of the anihilation of the Black American. Increasingly popular is a new book called Anglo-Saxon Agony, written by a local author, Dr. Tyson Tilden of the University of Maryland Medical School in Baltimore. In recent televised interviews and in a recent lecture attended by the writer, Dr. Tilden described his purpose as a turnabout in which he suggests that the major cause of the sense of alienation among whites is their inability to achieve the warmth (soul, if you will) that is the vehicle of survival

for the Black American.

Perhaps Dr. Tilden's views provide a most fitting close to this survey of a national literature which has from its very beginnings been robbed of the richness, earthiness, the "soul" of that vast body of writing by Black Americans which has remained submerged for three hundred years. There is little doubt of the sense of alienation and lack of identity that pervades contemporary American life and is reflected in its literature. Just as one cannot hold another person down without limiting his own progress, one cannot deny the identity of another human being without impairing his own. Two quotes seem appropriate, spanning as they do almost sixty years:

> "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line"
>
> William Edward Burghardt DuBois, 1903

> "If you don't know my name, you don't know your own."
>
> James Baldwin, 1960's

COMPARATIVE CHART: BLACK LITERATURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAINSTREAM AMERICAN LITERATURE

PERIOD	MAINSTREAM LITERATURE		BLACK LITERATURE	
	Characteristics	Major Authors	Characteristics	Major Authors
Early Literature: The Oral Tradition	Utilitarian writing Sermons, debates, Records, histories, Letters No native literature	Jonathan Edwards Cotton Mather Sarah Kemble Knight	Legislated illiteracy Folk and slave narratives Sermons, spirituals No written literature	Un-named Slaves Black Preachers
Early Literature: Literature of Protest	Political protest against British imper- ialism Expository persuasion Defiance of repression Pamphleteers	Jefferson Patrick Henry Thomas Paine Benjamin Franklin	Autobiographical narratives Expository persuasion Protest against slavery Defiance of literacy laws First Black newspapers and magazines	William Wells Brown Phillis Wheatley Benjamin Banneker Jupiter Hammon Briton Hammon
	Flowering of National Literature		Banneker's Almanack David Walker's Appeal Russwurm's Freedom's Journal F. Douglass' North Star	
	(Transcendentalists) .Rise of leisure .Educated "men of letters"	Irving Cooper Bryant Emerson Hawthorne Longfellow Holmes Whittier Thoreau Melville Poe		

PERIOD	MAINSTREAM LITERATURE		BLACK LITERATURE	
III	Characteristics	Major Authors	Characteristics	Major Authors
Post Civil War: Literature of Social Consciousness	Westward movement Discovery of "grass-roots Americana" Social protest Realism Naturalism	Harte Harris Twain Joaquin Miller Howells Garland Frank Norris O. Henry	Preoccupation with the racial condition Postures on the race question: "Uncle Ton" vs. militancy Expository persuasion	W.E.B. DuBois Booker T. Washington Paul Lawrence Dunbar James Weldon Johnson
IV				
Early 20th Century: The American Renaissance	"New freedom": individuality Less concern for social movements Experimental modes International attention to American literature Beginnings of American leadership in the arts	Lewis Eliot Dos Pasos Faulkner T. Wolfe Hemingway O'Neill	Harlem Renaissance Unparalleled expression in all genres Philosphical and idealized questioning Birth of true literary tradition National recognition of Black artists	Claude McKay Countee Cullen James Weldon Johnson Langston Hughes Arna Bontemps Jean Toomer

PERIOD	MAINSTREAM LITERATURE		BLACK LITERATURE	
V	Characteristics	Major Authors	Characteristics	Major Authors
Literature of the Depression Years	Economic trials Horrors of deprivation Naturalism	Steinbeck Dos Pasos Wolfe Faulkner	Economic plight of Blacks Tragedy of the Black experience Naturalism	Arna Bontemps Sterling Brown Langston Hughes Ann Petry
VI				
The Contemporary Scene: Alienation and Identity	Passing of many literary "greats" Diffusion of purposes, style, genres Psychological and psychoanalytical influences "New faces" on the literary scene	Richard Wright McCullers Capote Bellow Malamud Salinger Mailer Ellison Baldwin	Universal recognition of Black Writers Quest for equal rights Diverse modes of expression Rise of Black drama (Experimental theatre) "New faces" on the literary scene	Wright Baldwin Ellison LeRoi Jones Douglas Turner Ward Ossie Davis Lofton Mitchel Ed Bullins Jerome Bennett

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